ENSAYO

SOCIAL POLICY AND THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION: INSIGHTS FOR ANALYSING THE WELFARE SYSTEMS OF CITIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

LA POLÍTICA SOCIAL Y LA DIMENSIÓN TERRITORIAL: IDEAS PARA ANALIZAR LOS SISTEMAS DE BIENESTAR DE LAS CIUDADES EN EL SUR GLOBAL

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ABSTRACT

Social policy and welfare studies have recently re-incorporating the notions of territory, space and scale. Overall, this literature departs from the recognition that there is tendency towards a more localized welfare provision in practically most countries in the Western world, due to, among other factors, different process of decentralization in the last four decades. However, most of the discussion around scale, territory and local welfare systems have mostly focused on industrialized countries. This paper discusses the use of scale, territory and space in the analysis of local welfare systems. The aim of this papers is twofold. First, this paper analyses how the notion of scale, space and territory are used to study social policy in the context of cities. Second, this paper provides some theoretical insights to analyse local welfare systems in megalopolis, such as Mexico City.

KEY WORDS: Mexico City, megalopolis, local welfare systems, territory, Mexico.

RESUMEN

Los estudios sobre política social y sistemas de bienestar han incorporado nuevamente las nociones de territorio, espacio y escala. En general, esta literatura parte del reconocimiento de que existe una tendencia hacia una provisión de bienes y servicios sociales más localizada, en prácticamente la mayoría de los países del mundo occidental, debido, entre otros factores, a diferentes procesos de descentralización registrados en las últimas cuatro décadas. Sin embargo, la mayor parte de la discusión sobre escala, territorio y sistemas de bienestar local se ha centrado principalmente en los países industrializados. Este documento discute el uso de dichos conceptos en el análisis de los sistemas de bienestar locales. El objetivo de este tarbajo es doble. Primero, este artículo analiza cómo las nociones de escala, espacio y territorio se usan para el studio de la política social en ciudades. En segundo lugar, este trabajo proporciona algunas ideas teóricas para estudiar los sistemas de bienestar locales de megalopolis, tal como la Ciudad de México.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Ciudad de México, megalópolis, sistemas de bienestar locales, territorio, México.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Until recently, the territorial or territorial dimension was neglected in the analysis of social policy and welfare regimes (Kazepov, 2010; 2008; McEwen and Moreno, 2005). In the 1970s and 1980s, different waves decentralization started in both the developed and developing countries. Overall, these decentralization waves involved the transfer of part of the powers of the central government to regional or local authorities, as well as a major involvement of citizens in decision-making. Accordingly, decentralization gave rise to a new distribution of decision-making between the central government and its regional and local outposts –and other sectors of society.

Decentralization, of course, also took place in the production of welfare. Hence, central governments transferred –in different forms and degrees— functions and/or resources to the lower levels of the government involved in the production of welfare (McEwen and Moreno, 2005), as well as decision-making powers and resources to civil society. These rearrangements implied the ending of the national governments as the hegemonic actor in the production of welfare. In the face of all these changes, social policy analysists started to pay attention to the local or subnational arenas, which lead to the ending of the predominance of the nation-state (the national) as a unit of analysis in welfare studies (Andreotti and Maggione, 2014; 2013; Andreotti et al., 2012).

In this context, scholars began to incorporate the territorial dimension as an explicit factor in their analysis of welfare regimes and social policy (Sabatinelli and Semprebon, 2017, Bifulco, 2016, Scarpa, 2016, Ferrera, 2016; Panican and Johansson, 2016; Oosterlynck et al., 2015; Béland, and Lecours, 2008; McEwen and Moreno, 2005). The

incorporation of the territorial led to new avenues of research in social policy. Among other things, the incorporation of this dimension has meant to explicitly take into consideration the role of the local or subnational arenas of social action in the production of welfare, in the modern societies. Thus, the notion of local welfare system emerged as a useful analytical category to understand the so-called territorial dimension of social policy (Andreotti and Maggione, 2014; 2013; Andreotti et al., 2012).

However, the territorial was not easily imported into welfare analysis. The so-called territorial dimension usually means different things. In consequence, it is not always clear how the territorial is integrated in this study of social policy and welfare regimes. This apparent confusion may be due to the broad spectrum of its application in the study of social policy. To better understand how the territorial dimension can be operationalized for analysing the production of welfare in the context of cities, this work proposes to depart from the notion of local welfare system (Andreotti and Maggione, 2014; 2013; Andreotti et al., 2012).

This work focuses on local welfare systems in the meso-level, particularly in big cities or city-regions.[1] The aim of this papers is to discuss to main aspects related to the territorial dimension of social policy in urban contexts, particularly in cities, which can be applied to study such dimension in developing countries, such as Mexico. This concept is as resourceful entry point for analysing the different phenomena related to the so-called territorial dimension in social policy. To do so, the notion of

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1. The city-region is an analytical construct, which subject to different definitions (and methodologies) to map it); in general, refers to a functional economic space that delineates the boundaries of what is known as the functional urban region (Davoudi, 2008).

local welfare system is used as an entry category for applying these two categories for the analysis of social policy in cities.

The reaming of this paper is organized as follows. In the second section, the (re)discovery of territory in welfare studies is briefly discussed. The third sections analyzed the two main aspects related to the territorial dimension of social policy, as well as the concept of local welfare system. In the fourth section, it discussed the potential applicability of these notions for studying the production of welfare in cities located in developing countries, such as Mexico. Finally, some conclusive remarks are presented.

2. THE (RE)DISCOVERY OF TERRITORY IN WELFARE STUDIES

The concepts of space, place, scale and territory have had a key position in the social division of geographical knowledge (Jessop et al., 2008). One of the main concerns of social geographers has been how capitalist societies organize state territory (Jonas and Wood, 2016). Hence, scale and territory, among other spatial categories, have been problematized for long time in this literature. In comparison, those spatial categories have recently been incorporated into the analysis of welfare regimes and social policy (Sabatinelli and Semprebon, 2017; Bifulco, 2016; Scarpa, 2016; Ferrera, 2016; Panican and Johansson, 2016; Oosterlynck et al., 2015; McEwen and Moreno, 2005).

Overall, the incorporation of spatial categories for analyzing the production of welfare run parallel to the changes put into motion due to world-wide changes: the implementation of different process

of decentralization, in the last three decades, and, more recently, the adverse effects of recurrent global financial crisis on national economies –and national public budgets (Kazepov, 2010; 2008; McEwen and Moreno, 2005). Overall, decentralization involved to the empowerment of sub-national levels of government, which altered –at different degrees––the relation of power between central and sub-national authorities. In the realm of social policy, these changes have been mainly analyzed in industrialized countries.

In these countries, the impact of decentralization in welfare systems is commonly known as a devolution of responsibilities from the central government to local bodies (vertical subsidiary), which has often gone along with the pluralization of actors involved in the provision of social services (horizontal subsidiarity) (Kazepov, 2008; 2010). In general, this devolution processes meant that national governments have tended to rely more on subnational governments for the design and delivery of welfare. Thus, decentralization involved changes in the participation of subnational tiers of government (and other social actors) in the production of welfare, which modified the distribution of responsibilities among governmental (and non-governmental) actors in this matter. In other words, decentralization brought about the reconfiguration of the responsibilities of welfare provision within nation-states.

As decentralization generated different processes at subnational level directly related to the making of social policy, analysts started to pay attention to the internal divisions of national-states. Among other aspects, this attention led analysts to scrutinize about role of different subnational levels -e.g. the local, regional, and metropolitan, among other— in the production of welfare. In this sense, the effects of decentralization in the realm of social

policy led to the end of the nation-state as the unit of analysis in welfare policies studies (McEwen and Moreno, 2005). Since the nation-state was the unit of analysis in welfare studies for long time, much of this literature implicitly or explicitly examined welfare development and social policies "within the framework of the nation-state, assuming an all-embracing state national identity rooted in both cultural and civic axes" (McEwen and Moreno, 2005, p. 4).

In industrialized countries, where welfare states are historic construct associated to the very development of national-states, the scrutiny of the territorial or spatial dimension of welfare systems meant to question their assumed homogeneity in terms of welfare provision. Therefore, scholars started to pay attention to the fact that many advanced welfare states were "territorially heterogeneous, with citizens often holding multiple territorial identities", and those identities gained "political significance with establishment and reinforcement of sub-state political institutions" (McEwen and Moreno, 2005, p. 4). In addition, as mentioned before, decentralization process meant the reconfiguration of the responsibilities between central and sub-national authorities in the production of welfare.

Thus, decentralization shed light to the territorial heterogeneity of nation-states, as well as the political dynamics of such heterogeneity in terms of welfare provision. This scenario prompted analysts to import theoretical and conceptual tools to grasp the new realities brought about by decentralization and other social changes registered from the 1980s. These new realities had to do with the re-composition or re-arrangement of welfare systems in terms their territory or spatial configurations. Accordingly, social policy scholars adopted many elements of the conceptual arsenal

that social geographers developed to study the territorial or spatial configuration of societies. Hence, spatial categories such as scale and territory and their derivatives (territorial, scalar, rescaling, territorializing and so on so for) started to become buzzy words in social policy literature.

Undoubtably, the adoption –and adaptation— of conceptual categories from social geography into welfare studies has been fertile and productive, which can be appreciated by the increasing number of academic publications related to the so-called territorial dimension of social policy in last decade. Nevertheless, the adoption of territory, and other spatial categories, into welfare studies has not been free from ambiguities or certain confusions (Scarpa, 2016). One of the reasons of the apparent ambiguities at the time of adopting (or adapting) the territorial into social policy analysis is that spatial categories themselves are still contended notions (Cox, 2013; Keating, 2013).

In this respect, Keating (2013, p. 16) explained that the use of terms such as space, territory and place, is "rooted in national traditions and normative frames and linguistic conventions, as with the contested term 'region', or when 'territory' is linked to ideas of control and domination, while 'place' conjures up community and cohesion". Furthermore, the way in which those terms are understood can vary across disciplines.[2] Leaving aside the ample

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2. According to Keating (2013:16), traditionally, "political scientists and sociologists, if they incorporate territory, tend to use it as a single concept, alongside their other conceptual building blocks such as class, gender, and ethnicity. Geographers, for whom it encompasses their discipline, divide it into a number of different concepts including territory, space, place, locale, milieu, and region, although there is not a consensus on a single

range of meanings of spatial categories, they can be divided into two categories, which in turn are related to two perspectives of spatial organization: the "so-called territorial view point", and the "so-called relational point" (Jonas, 2012, p. 263), which are not necessarily opposing perspectives but complementary; that is, they are two faces of the same coin.

The territorial viewpoint is focused on the bounded and limited dimension of social space organization. This viewpoint emphasizes the fixed nature of the concept of space (Cox, 2013), which is used to refer to different territorial units at different scales –e.g. politic-administrative scales, such as the national or local, or specific regions or places—. The bounded conceptualizations of territory, which allude to hierarchies and limits, are indispensable to make sense of practically any social activity. In the realm of social policy, the notions of territory and scale are frequently used to make sense of different social phenomena and processes, by specifying the spatial scale at which they take place, such the national, sub-national or local levels. Thus, the use of bounded spatial units is indispensable to specify the territorial dimension in welfare analysis.

On the other hand, the relational viewpoint emphasizes the fluid, porous, flexible dimension of social space, and draws "attention to interspatial relations, flows and networks" (Jonas, 2012, p. 263). Thus, spatial categories that emphasizes flexibility and dynamic of social space are networks and flows (Cox, 2013), which are used to make sense of spatial organizations that imply such characteristics (for instance, the mobility of production

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conceptual grid, even within any European language". However, it seems that more nuanced and complex conceptualizations of territory are increasingly used in welfare studies.

systems and migration of population groups). In general, these spatial categories seem to receive less attention in welfare studies, apart from the concepts of networks, which has a long tradition in social policy literature, and it is not necessarily related to any spatial perspective.

As it can be appreciated, these perspectives point out to different characteristics of the spatial organization of societies. Bounded and "fluid" conceptualizations of spatial categories, such as territory, are indispensable to understand how spatial organization operates in real life. In consequence, the territorial dimension of any social activity can be approach from different perspectives. After all, territory is the sphere where all other spheres of social action –economic, social and cultural— materialize in real life. Although any definition of territory "is based upon physical space but even a purely physical definition of territory is a matter of conceptualization and selection of criteria" (Keating, 2013, p. 21).

In addition, the notion of territory, and other spatial categories, is not assumed to be as a static or unidimensional factor, but one with is socially contracted and evolving over time (Cox, 2013; Keating, 2013). This constructivist approach adds another layer of complexity into the conceptualization of territory (and other spatial categories). On top of various ways to define territory, territory is socially constructed (Cox, 2013). "So, for the purposes of social analysis, territory is a concept and not just a physical element and is no more or less real than the other encompassing concepts that we use to organize the social world, like gender, class, and ethnicity" (Keating, 2013, p. 18). In other words, territory is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept, which embrace different conceptualizations.

Undoubtedly, social geographers have offered rich conceptualizations of territory, and other spatial categories, which help to grasp different aspects of social relations and processes, under the premise that space is socially constructed. Overall, conceptualizations of territory refer to relational and not-relational views of social space, which are complementary, as they emphasize two different –but related— dimension of it. So, both perspectives are needed to define different spatial units to make sense of different aspects of socio-spatial organization (Jonas, 2012, p. 263). This inherent complexity of the notion of territory, which has long emphasized by in social geography, was embraced (in different ways) by scholars in other disciplines, including welfare studies. Accordingly, territory is no longer treated only as a static or unidimensional factor, which can be easily obviated from the analysis of social policy. Territory started to be used as an organizing and explanatory concept in social policy analysis, without restricting is conceptualization to an idea of territory as a material context or scenario where things happened. In this sense, the adoption of the so-called territorial dimension into social policy implied "the discovery of the territory as a dynamic entity that is active and under construction" (Governa and Salone, 2004, p. 797).

Unsurprisingly, the complex way in which territory is address in social geography it can make it difficult to directly transfer and applied to other scientific fields, including social policy. In consequence, this complex approach of territory (and other spatial categories, such as scale) often leads to a confusion about how scholars have used them. Moreover, it can be complicated to define what is the territorial dimension of social policy. However, the fact that territory is defined in different ways (Jonas, 2012) has enriched social policy analysis. Beyond the potential ambiguities or confusions around the

use of the concept of territory in social policy, as in any social activity, its utility or pertinence as explanatory factor depends upon the specific social phenomenon under analysis, as well as the questions addressed for its analysis (Jonas, 2012; Keating, 2013). In this line of thought, this work departs from the concept of local welfare regime to identify the territorial dimension of social policy. This point is discussed in the following section.

3. LOCAL WELFARE SYSTEMS AND THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF SOCIAL POLICY

In general, a welfare system has a functional and a territorial dimension, analytically differentiable, even when there is an interrelation between them (Keating, 2013). Keating, 2013, p. 23) explained that, in fact, "any social, economic, or political activity has a functional and a territorial scale and the two principles are inextricably intertwined, with neither determining the other. Indeed, territory itself is defined by reference to its function and status". Therefore, it is important to keep in mind at the time of understanding the territorial dimension in welfare regimes.

Overall, the functional dimension of a welfare system refers, as its name implies, to the function of providing social goods and services for a given population, that is, the production of social welfare. The purpose of this welfare function can be considered as compliance with the social rights of the population. The territorial dimension of welfare, however, is not easily to identify in a simple and neat way, as it is can be related to different aspects. To describe these aspects, it is important to keep in mind that the rediscovery of

territorial dimension departed from the existence of national welfare systems.

This rediscovery refers to two different —but intertwined— phenomena and trends related to the production of welfare in modern societies, which can be synthesized as follows: 1) the territorial politics derived from the participation of the different scales of government involved the production of welfare, and 2) "the tendency to take the territory as the reference point for policies and interventions" (Bifulco, 2016, p. 628). In other words, the territorial dimension is related to the internal divisions of welfare systems, which are captured by using spatial categories. However, to clearly understand these two aspects is necessary to allude welfare functions or processes. Hence, to better specify the territorial dimension of social policy, we depart from the concept of local welfare system, which is briefly discussed in the next sub-section.

3.1 The emerge of local welfare systems

As mentioned before, the rediscovery of the territorial in the production of welfare has led to the adoptions of territorial terminology into social policies (for instance, territorialisation or rescaling, among other). It is widely assumed that, as all social activities, the production of welfare takes place in specific material and social contexts that take form at different territorial (or spatial) spheres. This idea seems intuitively obvious but is also very abstract. Somehow, this general idea has been encapsulated into the notion of territorial dimension of social policy. However, the concept of territorial dimension is used to make sense of a broad range of aspects and perspectives related to different phenomena and processes. As mentioned before,

welfare systems in rich and developing countries, have been undergoing continuous reforms in the light different decentralization processes, as well as financial pressures (Kazepov, 2008; 2010).

These reforms involved a major participation of local governments and organizations in designing and implementing social policies in developed and developing countries. However, this major involvement was not only due to decentralization and economic pressures, but also to the rise of social needs to which central authorities did not meet adequately. In the case of cities (in particularly, big cities), national welfare systems were increasingly challenged by changes in the labor market, in the demographic structure of the population, and in the distribution of income and other basic resources (such as housing or social care), among other social risks associated to urban context (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014). Therefore, these changes altered "the risk structure of contemporary societies, calling for radical changes in social protection programs" (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014, p. 4), and social policies, in general.

Accordingly, these internal pressures were, in different ways and degrees, met by local governments. This local governmental response became a pressure to policy innovation both at national and local levels (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014). In this context, local welfare systems emerged (Andreotti Mingione, and Polizzi, 2012; Andreotti and Mingione, 2013; 2014). Although this local welfare system exists in the context of national welfare arrangements, they responded to local dynamics. Andreotti et al. (2012, p. 1926) explained that local welfare should be considered "as specific configurations of population needs and welfare providers and resources emerging at the local levels". In line with this, local welfare systems are defined as "dynamic arrangements

in which the specific local socio-economic and cultural conditions give rise to different mixes of formal and informal actors, public or not, involved in the provision of welfare resources" (Andreotti and Mingione, 2012, p. 242).

In other words, these authors understood local welfare systems "as a set of arrangements interacting with specific local conditions, local welfare lies at the intersection between the two pathways of territorialization: the rescaling of welfare powers; and the design of policies targeted on contexts" (Andreotti and Mingione, 2012: 242). In this sense, local welfare systems do not only involve the local government "but also the complex combination of social and political institutions and actors who comprise the system, each shaped differently by cultural and historical factors and processes" (Andreotti and Mingione, 2012, p. 242).

In general, this definition has three main characteristics. First, this definition of local welfare system incorporates key of spatial categories, such as territory and scale, to make sense of the production of welfare at this level. Second, this definition can be applied to different territorial demarcation at subnational level, such as cities or regions (Bifulco, 2016). Third, the general aspects related the territorial dimension of welfare can be identified in more specific way: 1) the territorial politics of local welfare production, and 2) the inclusion of a territorial approach in the formulation and design of local social policies. As these two aspects are circumscribed into the realm of local welfare system, it makes it easier to understand and operationalized them. These to aspects are further discussed in the next subsection.

3.2 The territorial dimension of local welfare systems

In the context of local welfare system, the territorial dimension of social policy is observed in two different aspects. The first aspect is the territorial politics involved in the process of providing welfare in a specific local territorial demarcation, such a city or region. This aspect has to do with to elements: 1) "the territorial reorganization of public powers" (Bifulco, 2016, p. 628), that is, the public authorities related to different scales of politic-administrative boundaries operating in local welfare system, and 2) other non-governmental actors that can participate in the provision of welfare at different scales. Hence, governmental and no-governmental actors can operate at the different scales within a local welfare system configuration. All these actors can intervene the process of decision-making of social policies, but also in their implementation or funding.

In other words, the territorial organization refers to the distribution of responsibilities among different actors, operating at different scales of government or other spatial boundaries within a local welfare system. Hence, the territorial politics is shaped by the inter-scalar organization of delivery of welfare, in different areas, such as education, housing or social assistance, in which different actors (governmental and non-governmental) intervene. This inter-scalar organization involves the political dynamics among different the actors that participate and influence in the making of social policies, at any scale of scales relevant for the delivery of welfare. For instance, in a given city, actors at the national level, as well as at any level within the local boundaries of such city, can have influence in the political process of the making of local social policies.

The second aspect refers to the inclusion of a territorial approach in the formulation and design of local social policies. Overall, this aspect means that, at local level, policies and interventions are expected to respond to local demands or context (Bifulco, 2016). In this sense, the territorial approach in welfare delivery refers to the idea of taking the territory as a point of reference for the formulation of social policies (Palier, 1998; Bifulco, 2016). According to this idea, the local welfare approach gives a fundamental role to the territory, from a normative perspective, relative to the very way in which social policies are conceived, that is, the local is "seen as the best field to enhance the inhabitants' capabilities in the regeneration projects and processes" (De Vidovich, 2017, p. 562). Thus, the incorporation of the territorial dimension means that social policy initiatives and tools incorporate the demands and needs of the local context. In this sense, the territorial dimension of social policy is related to the localisation of public action, which essentially means the introduction of a 'local' perspective into design policies (Governa and Salone, 2004).

In synthesis, according to the two aspects that define the territorial dimension of social policy, the territorial factor has not residual character but is used as analytical category to examine policy process. Thus, the incorporation of the territorial dimension is made into a specific way to understand the production of welfare at local level –e.g. cites—. Hence, the incorporation of the territorial dimension can be applied (and operationalize) to make sense of social policy process in cities. In the next section, this point if further discussed in the next section.

4. LOCAL WELFARE SYSTEMS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: INSIGHTS FOR MEXICO CITY

The incorporation of the territorial dimension into social policy research has mainly done to analyse industrialized countries. In recent decades, welfare systems in rich nations (particularly, in European countries) have been undergoing continuous reforms in the light of financial pressures (Kazepov, 2008; 2010). Similarly, welfare systems in developing countries, such as Mexico, have also experienced similar reforms due to decentralization process and financial constraints, as described in the previous section. Thus, we have witnessed similar trends on the changes occurred to welfare systems in developing and developing nations.

In Mexico, these changes also led to the emerge of local welfares systems. Bifulco (2016, p. 632) explained that "local welfare is both the input to and the outcome of the development of cities and regions as political spaces". Due to the economic and social process that prevail in cities, especially in big cities, different social problems and demands arise in them (Mingione et al. 2002). Indeed, big cities are generally considered as the epicenters of varied social tensions, as well as severe social problems, such as **social exclusion, which is often deemed as "almost entirely an urban problem"** (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014, p. 4). In consequence, different actors (governments and non-governmental) face the challenge to give answers to those problems and needs, which are generally considered as the epicenters of these tensions.

This scenario is present in big cities in Mexico, particularly in Mexico City. This is the capital of Mexico (formerly named the Federal District)

and seat of its federal government.[3] This capital city is one of the most populated in the world, with almost 9 million of inhabitant (INEGI, 2015). Traditionally, Mexico City has been the political and cultural heart the country; local and national politics intertwine there like nowhere else in Mexico. Mexico City is subdivided into 16 *alcaldías*, or administrative areas, similar to boroughs: Álvaro Obregón, Atzcapotzalco, Benito Juárez, Coyoacán, Cuajimalpa de Morelos, Cuauhtémoc, Gustavo A. Madero, Iztacalco, Iztapalapa, La Magdalena Contreras, Miguel Hidalgo, Milpa Alta, Tláhuac, Tlalpan, Venustiano Carranza, and Xochimilco. Many administrative functions are centralized, *alcaldías* are granted several responsibilities, particularly, in the area of social policy.

Since 1997, the different administration of Mexico City´s central government have implemented an ample array of social policies, particularly from 2006 to 2012. In addition, the local authorities (*alcaldías)* have also implemented their own social programs, which usually replicated those initiatives implemented by the central government. The implementation of all these social policy initiatives, which implied the investment of a great amount of financial, organizational and human resources, have led to an emerge of local welfare system. Furthermore, the city's residents have long had a powerful voice in politics, owing to their large and dense population, which have favored the emerge of multiple and different civil organizations.

In this context, the analysis of territorial dimension of social policy in Mexico City is certainly relevant.

Nevertheless, the analysis of Mexico City`s policy, from a territorial perspective and as whole, that is, as welfare system, is practically non-existing. Most of the research of social policy in Mexico City has focused on specific programs or set of policies (Ziccardi, 2009; 2012). For this reason, it seems very promising to adopt a territorial perspective for analyzing the welfare production in Mexico City. The analysis of local welfare arrangement in Mexico, in line with the local welfare system approach, recognized that such arrangement operates with (and partial dependence upon) national legal and institutional frameworks.

Furthermore, the concept of territory is always present in the very Political Constitution of Mexico City, not only as a notion to describe or address different issues relative to the management or governance of the city (e.g. land use), but as an important part of ideals that local authorities should guarantee for Mexico City´s inhabitants. Article Twelve of the Political Constitution of Mexico City established that "the right to the city is a collective right that guarantees the full exercise of human rights, the social function of the city, its democratic management and ensures territorial justice, social inclusion and equitable distribution of public goods with the participation of citizens". However, the public discussion that lead to the definition of territorial justice, which, in turn, will be applied to design the needed public policies or actions needed to materialize such ideal, is a task yet to be done in Mexico City.

The first aspect of the territorial dimension of social policy (the territorial politics) is especially relevant due to the dynamics derived from the distribution of responsibilities among actors located at different scales of government (central government and *alcaldías* or boroughs), in the context increased electoral competition and the participation of civil

3. Mexico is federal country integrated by 31 states and Mexico City. In 2017, Mexico City was granted political autonomy, similar to that of the states. In that year, the Political Constitution of Mexico City was approved in 2017, and it entered into force in 2018. All its regulations will be completely in 2019.

organization. Furthermore, the politics of welfare in Mexico City is going to face new challenges due to the approval of the Constitution of Mexico City, in 2017, which granted more autonomy to their administrative areas (*alcaldías* or boroughs). *Alcaldías* are going to be transformed into *alcaldías* (or local municipalities), which also have attributions relative to social policymaking. Therefore, it is important to study the impact and effects of the participation of these local authorities on the governance of social policy in Mexico City.

The second aspect of the territorial dimension of social policy, that is, the incorporation of a territorial approach, is relevant not only because Mexico City face similar social challenges to other big cities around the globe, but because this area of analysis is hardly take into consideration in Mexico. Departing from the fact that regional or urban specificities influence the configuration of social risks in cities (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014), it is indispensable to identify such specificities to understand such social risks. Yet, "so far there has been no research aiming to identify the peculiarity of such configuration of risks in cities, and to analyze the impact of that on the material living conditions of the urban population". (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014, p. 4). This is the case of Mexico City. The research of specific social risks related to the context of Mexico City is very scarce.

The knowledge of specific social risks and social demands make it possible the inclusion of the territorial approach in formulation and design of social policies. In this respect, the territorial dimension meant that social policies are tailored to the population specific needs or social risk present in the local context. In other words, the inclusion of the territorial allows policy makers to respond to new social risks and demands in cities. It is important to note that the challenge to respond to new social risks implies a huge activation of local resources, including organization and financial resources (Andreotti et al 2012). Hence, this response involves the activation of welfare bodies "which are the main providers of social services and programs (such as childcare facilities, activation schemes, social inclusion activities, housing support) that may have a social and economic value added." (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014, p. 5).

In sum, the complexity of cities, which are places of wide diversity in a relatively small geographical delimitation, entails both great benefits and social costs (Dukes and Musterd 2012). As Ranci, Brandsena and Sabatinelli (2014, p. 21) explained:

> In cities, social vulnerability and risks of conflict and fragmentation are more concentrated and, thus, more apparent. Yet cities are also places of encounters and interactions that may foster innovation, creativity and improvement of social cohesion (Miciukiewicz *et al.* 2012). The specific configurations of needs and resources that constitute local welfare systems find in cities a peculiar context, given by the concurrent presence of some elements: the complexity of social demands, a specific scale of government, a comparatively denser articulation of actors' networks, and some economies of scales.

In this line of though, the territorial dimension of social policies in the context of Mexico City is an urgent task. This task requires to look at the main social policy instruments of the welfare system implemented by the government authorities at different scale of government (central and local). For instance, it is important to analyze the design of the main social policy instruments aimed at certain groups considering social vulnerability (for example, seniors, single mothers, young people), implemented in Mexico City. In sum, the inclu-

sion of the territorial dimension for the analysis of social policy in Mexico City will allow to better understand the complex dynamics to deliver (or produce) welfare to their inhabitants.

5. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

For a long period of time, welfare state research focused on national welfare reforms and national social policies as its main objects of study. Accordingly, there is an extensive research on national welfare regime typologies and the analysis of social policymaking, in general, focused on the national scale. However, the rediscovery of the territorial dimension, as explained before, meant that academics placed greater attention on what was going on at subnational level, that is, to look at the local. Among other things, this attention led academics to the look at the relevance and structure of local welfare systems.

As discussed along this paper, the rediscovery of territorial dimension in social policy studies has allowed to better understand different changes in welfare systems, which involve the participation of actors at different scales of government in the production of welfares. This territorial dimension can be synthesized into two different (and interrelated) aspects: 1) the territorial politics of welfare provision, and 2) the adoption of a territorial approach for developing social policies (Bifulco, 2016). These aspects refer to processes and phenomena related to the production (or provision) of welfare, which require the use of the of notion of territory and scale (and other spatial categories). To order better understand the territorial dimension of social policy, this paper depart from the notion of local welfare system.

This local welfare system approach (Andreotti and Mingione; 2013; 2014; Andreotti et al. 2012), allows to better analyze the public efforts and the set-up of different actors (public, non- profit and for-profit) engaged in designing and delivering welfare services and provisions, in cities. This approach also emphasizes that a local welfare system is not an adaptation of national welfare arrangements to local contexts, but a system in their own rights, even though it is imbedded in the former. Thus, the local welfare system allows to take a broader analytical perspective, in which the main elements of delivery of welfare, that is, social policies and public agencies (and other actors) in charge of implementing them, can only fully understood in their respective local context (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013). However, this approach also recognizes that local welfare systems operated within the complex set of pressures and challenges facing contemporary national welfare systems.

Finally, the local welfare system approach embraces analytical tools that enable researchers to analyze them in different countries, and in consideration to the interaction of the local welfare arrangements with the national ones. For this reason, this perspective allows to understand and operationalize the territorial dimension of social policy in systematic and clear manner. In this sense, the territorial aspect is revealed as an inescapable and constitutive dimension of social policies. And the exploration of this dimension in social research agenda is still a task in early progress in many developing countries, such as Mexico.

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